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SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN'S CSIS OSCE SEMINAR REINFORCES THE CHALLENGE OF
THE 2010 CHAIRMANSHIP

REF: USOSCE 0241
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11. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

12. (SBU) SUMMARY: The U.S. Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Institute for New Democracies, as part of a year-long joint project with the government of Kazakhstan, brought together in Astana on October 28 U.S. and European NGO think-tank representatives with Kazakhstani government representatives for a day-long seminar, "Kazakhstan's OSCE Chairmanship: Challenges and Opportunities." The seminar covered the OSCE's three dimensions, with multiple voices, both Kazakhstani and Euro-Atlantic, pressing their sometimes competing views. The session of special interest was the Military and Security Dimension that occasionally criticized Russia and led the Russian Ambassador to be unusually blunt when he was invited to make the first response after the formal presentations. Kazakhstan repeatedly tells us it will be an honest broker during its 2010 OSCE chairmanship. This contentious seminar session suggests Astana will have its work cut out for it. If it can maintain a progressive-leaning balance within the OSCE, we suggest that will represent a step forward in the long evolution of the OSCE. END SUMMARY.

13. (SBU) Martha Brill Olcott of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace opened the session with recommendations for what Kazakhstan should avoid as priorities during its 2010 OSCE chairmanship, including Russia's pressure for a New European Security Treaty. Immediately following Olcott, Sergey Fedoseyev of Kazakhstan's Center for Military Strategic Studies advocated strongly for a new European security architecture with the OSCE overseeing coordination among NATO, the Commonwealth Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), and "other Eurasian bodies."

14. (SBU) Kuralay Baizakova, Director of the European Information Center at Kazakh National University, noted that Kazakhstan can be a "bridge between the civilizations of the East and West," the honest broker to bring together NATO, CSTO, and the Shanghai Security Organization (SCO). She also recommended that Kazakhstan might choose, as a priority, new forms of interaction with Afghanistan, e.g., training customs officials and combating corruption. She

further suggested that another priority Kazakhstan might consider would be to modernize the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty as a way to begin to "reload" European security.

HITTING A NERVE

15. (SBU) Vladimir Socor of the Jamestown Foundation, noting Kazakhstan's interest in "protracted conflicts" as a priority, stated that "inter-communal conflicts have become inter-state, where borders are changed by force (i.e., Russia-Georgia), ethnic cleansing occurs, and one country's foreign troops (Russia's) are stationed by force." Without explicitly naming the protracted conflicts in Moldova and Georgia, he scored "internationally illegal peace-keeping by a single country (Russia)." Noting that Kazakhstan has already tentatively mentioned Bosnia and Kosovo as areas where new conflict-prevention modalities might be useful, Socor suggested that Kazakhstan might better focus its attention on Crimea and reaffirm the OSCE's Budapest Memorandum of 1994, "signed by all the great nuclear powers" (i.e., including Russia), that guarantees Ukraine's territorial integrity and the non-interference in Ukraine's internal political processes." He called for Kazakhstan's OSCE chairmanship to protect the Geneva process in Abkhazia, as well as to review compliance with the OSCE's Istanbul Summit CFE Commitments of 1999. Socor also asserted directly that Russia wants to "separate" its view of European security from the Corfu Process and "impose" Russian President Medvedev's vision of a new European security architecture.

16. (SBU) Former U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE Stephen Minikes advised Kazakhstan, "Keep your friends to the north (Russia) and the east (China), but don't pursue their goals - pursue your own."

RUSSIAN AMBASSADOR REACTS

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17. (SBU) After the official presentations, the session's moderator invited Russian Ambassador Mikhail Bocharnikov to give the pre-arranged first response. Clearly irritated, which is unusual for him, he asked, "Where are all these recommendations coming from? From U.S. NGOs! Kazakhstan is a respected sovereign country, and I'm surprised by the 'teaching tone' we've just heard, because Kazakhstan deserves the greatest respect. Kazakhstan should not be associated with Russia or China? If not, with whom - with the United States? I note that this conference is dominated by Kazakhstan and the United States, but I represent Russia. I'm surprised at the recommendations to move away from security and peacekeeping in Europe. I'm surprised by the recommendation for the OSCE to involve itself in Afghanistan, which is clearly a U.S. opinion, certainly not ours! We want the OSCE to emphasize a legally binding security treaty for Europe, not dabble in Afghanistan. Russia fully agrees that NATO, CSTO, SCO, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), and the European Union all need to work together. It's too bad that you rejected this worthy concept today, but Russia will organize a conference in 2010 to consider this proposal. You NGOs from the United States need to understand that Europe doesn't always agree with you." Bocharnikov concluded, "I am pleased that Kazakhstan supports consensus in the OSCE. All opinions need to be heard, and consensus needs to be achieved." With that, he got up and left the conference room.

18. (SBU) Most foreign diplomats observing the seminar interpreted Bocharnikov leaving as a "walk-out." In fact, we confirmed later that he was frustrated the seminar session had significantly run over its scheduled time, and he had to leave immediately for the airport to receive the visiting President of Ingushetia. Even though Bocharnikov was not present, Olcott reminded everyone that the seminar was part of a U.S.-Kazakhstan working group, not a Russia-Kazakhstan working group -- "Russia is welcome to organize its own." CSIS Senior Researcher Janusz Bugajski noted, "We are NGOs. We don't represent the U.S. government. I don't know how well that concept is understood in Russia. We make recommendations, but no one has to accept them."

19. (SBU) COMMENT: This year-long CSIS program to prepare Kazakhstan for its OSCE chairmanship was not just window-dressing;

it has been an on-going forum that the government of Kazakhstan organized to hear a wide range of Euro-Atlantic views, a certain number of which we believe they are taking on board. But Astana is also hearing, mostly through diplomatic channels, Russia's unvarnished advice -- and sometimes, we are told, quite insistently.

Kazakhstan continues to assert that it will be an "honest broker" as the 2010 OSCE chair, and we believe, by and large, it will be -- but that means neither side will be fully satisfied. It is clear that Russia and a number of other former Soviet states will not fully adopt anytime soon the bulk of Western Euro-Atlantic world views and values. If Kazakhstan can maintain a pragmatic balance between the OSCE's two blocks, and if the Euro-Atlantic states can resist letting perfection be the enemy of the good, we suggest that Kazakhstan's chairmanship will represent a step forward in the long evolution of the OSCE, not a "lost year," as reftels suggest. END COMMENT.

HOAGLAND